TRANSCRIPT— NANCY TICKLE, CINDY AND VAN DOTSON

Interviewees: Nancy Tickle, Cindy and Van Dotson
Interviewers: Tealey Ellis & Judith Robertson
Interview Date: June 20, 2019
Location: Fairview Library
Length: 1 digital recording; 01:05:03
Transcriber: Brandon Widner
Transcription Date: April 14, 2023
Abstract: Nancy Tickle, Cindy and Van Dotson discuss their lives in Fairview, and how they are all connected together through a local store.

TE: My name is Tealey Ellis and I'm a volunteer with the Fairview Library Oral History Project. Today, June 20th, 2019, I am interviewing Nancy Tickle and her sister Cindy Dotson and Cindy's husband, Van Dotson. Thank you all for talking with us today and sharing your information.

JR: This is Judith Robertson, a volunteer in the Fairview Oral History Project. The project is part of the North Carolina Room Special Collections at Pack Memorial Library. The North Carolina Room's mission is to collect, preserve, and provide access to the history of Buncombe County and the surrounding area. Items in the North Carolina Room include paper items such as photos, postcards, manuscripts, maps, and the like, as well as recorded oral histories, folks like you. All of the recordings made and historical materials collected for this project will become part of the permanent collection at Pack Library. Your interview will be transcribed with your permission and preserved for anyone interested in local history as well as for future generations. With your permission, the transcript will also be added to our online database. Documents of all types, including photos and letters, will be stored in our climate control storage area.

They will also be scanned, so there'll be a digital copy on the computer. If you prefer to keep the documents, they can be scanned and returned to you. Our goal is to find missing pieces of information and to record your first-person narrative regarding your experiences

living in Fairview. This is Judith Robertson recording the oral history of Nancy Tickle, her sister Cindy Dotson and her husband Van Dotson at the Fairview Library at 10:45 AM on June 28th, 2019, for the Fairview Oral history project for the North Carolina Room at Pack Library in the Buncombe County Library System. The conditions of use form for sound and video recordings has been signed by the interviewees.

TE: Could you turn that off a minute?

Again, thank you, Nancy, Cindy, and Van for this interview today. And I noticed from your life history form that Nancy, you were born at St. Joseph Hospital in Asheville, and Cindy – Bat Cave Clinic in Bat Cave, North Carolina. And Van you were born in Charlotte, North Carolina. So, how long have each of you lived here in Fairview? All your life for the two of you. Never moved away or?

CD: Well, I moved away. I take it back.

TE: Okay.

CD: Nancy went to college in 1960 to 1963, and then she worked in Maryland and Delaware and returned here in 1969. And that's when her husband took over the store-

NT: And that's when the first of the... was born.

CD: Yeah, her first child was born here. Yeah. They moved back here when she was pregnant. And I lived here from 1955 until 1999. And at that point we moved to Rutherfordton, North Carolina with my parents, I grew up in the same house where when I was born, my parents lived there and now my daughter lives there.

TE: Oh wow!

CD: And that's on Cane Creek Road-

NT: And it's very good too.

TE: Where did-

VD: My dad was from Fairview, from Brush Creek.

TE: Okay.

VD: and-

TE: And what was his name?

VD: Griffin Dotson.

TE: Okay.

VD: Tip.

TE: Tip is his-

VD: Yeah. Everybody knows him as Tip. And he met my mom in Mount Airy and I'm adopted.

TE: Okay.

VD: And they got me in Mount Airy. I was born in Charlotte and we moved back here in either ‘49 or ‘50, something like that. And being that age, I don't really remember.

TE: I totally understand. I understand. And so, you've lived here since then?

VD: Until '99 when Cindy and I moved to Rutherfordton.

TE: Okay. But I still call that here.

VD: Yeah.

TE: It's close enough. What kind of work did your parents do? Cindy, you mentioned?

CD: Okay, so they were merchants and self-employed. When they first met, well, my dad was the school bus driver for Garren Creek Road. They might have known each other earlier. My mother was still in school. When she went to school at Pleasant Grove School. It's where Pleasant Grove Baptist Church is now, it's a one room school house, and I did have a picture of that I should have brought, with the ... everyone that attended the school. But my dad was the bus driver, which it wasn't really a bus, it was more like a truck/van, but they would pickup kids. And then actually both of them went to work at Sayles Biltmore Bleacheries for a couple years. But my dad on the side had a truck and would go to South Carolina and pick up fruit and vegetables, haul it back and until, and they were married in 1936.

So, in 1937 they pooled all their money together, borrowed some money. I think they had $300 and bought their first store, and that was the picture that I was going to show you. And so, after that dad diversified some, he bought the sawmill and the grist mill across the street and had built another sawmill and bought property and sold it and traded that and had some rental units, but built another store.

NT: Built another store.

CD: Yeah. Built a post office. He actually built the tire store. He was in his 80s.

TE: Oh my!

CD: That's down across from Hot Dog King. Hot Dog King used to be the post office. He built that. And so, he was diversified in what he did and Mother after things were going well with the store business, became a stay-at-home wife, but she always managed all the bookkeeping for everything.

TE: She was still working.

CD: Yes. She was a lot of the brains behind everything that happened. Yes.

TE: At any time did either of you, Nancy or Cindy work in the store and help out any?

NT: No.

CD: Well, Nancy, your husband... Well dad leased it out before I was born, and I was born in 1955 and Daddy had leased out the building and the merchandise and the Bowman family were running the store at that time. And they ran it until, in 1969, David and Nancy came back and bought the inventory that was in it and started running the store. And so yes, Nancy worked at it when they first bought it some, and then I worked after school some at the store and-

NT: And then I did teaching.

CD: Yeah. And I was just at that time, 14, 15 years old.

JR: And the store you're referring to is?

CD: Fairview Supply Company. It became then Tickle's, and now is Dickie's. But it was originally, Fairview Supply Company was located on Village Road, but it just, when it became a bigger store back during the Depression or after the Depression.

NT: But they still... Do the store. We owned the store.

CD: Yeah, you still had the building. But after the Depression, it became a really busy center that, I mean they had two checkout lines that were going all the time, it was bigger than Bob Ingle's first store. My dad is all..., but I mean they delivered groceries even all the way to Rutherford County. They knew a lot of people. They knew the people's families.

TE: Was there any charge for delivering?

CD: I don't know. Probably something, I don't... But I have no idea. It probably depended who it was and how bad the need. And I will have to say in my teaching career, I guess this was about 1996, I had a family, I'm a special education teacher and a family had been discovered in the Fairview community that their children had never attended school and they really didn't trust the school system. They didn't want to have their children there. I

was at the middle school, they had a daughter in my room and they didn't want her to come to school because they were very fearful having them outside the home. And we had a meeting and the grandmother came and I was able to build a relationship with that family by going back to where my father used to deliver food and groceries to that family. And so, we were able to make a connection and build a bond and trust just because of that delivery system.

JR: That's fabulous.

TE: Life is truly a circle sometimes.

JR: Well in my understanding that the store started out on Village Road.

CD: That's correct.

JR: But then a new store was built-

CD: That's correct.

JR: On Cane Creek - I mean, on 74.

CD: Yes.

JR: Okay.

CD: Yes.

TE: Van, what did your father work at?

VD: Well, when they were in the trucking business in Mount Airy, my grandfather had a truck line and that's where he met mom. He worked for another trucking company, but they met and we came back here to visit my grandmother who still lived on Brush Creek at that point. And he came out to Woods Store, Woods Place I think they called it, which is on 74 just past Fairview Grocery now, I think there's just a little bit of a building left there in the curve before you get to Daltons. But it was a just a little country store and

they sold beer and it was the last place that you could get beer before you got to Mecklenburg County.

TE: Oh wow.

VD: So, it was a pretty good business. But anyway, dad came over to buy some beer and he came back and told mom, he says, "Guess what gal? We own a store." So that's how they ended up staying there. And the store was built by Edmund Woods and then his son Henry ran it and that's who dad bought it from. The Woods lived up at the top of the hill across from where the store is there. There's still an entrance I think there. And then they continued to run it.

It was a little, a little as all country stores were, a little gas station had a couple of pumps sold pure gas and then just had the groceries and the beer and they did a good beer business because there was no one else around. And dad eventually expanded the store and put in TVs and appliances and had a service technician that worked on the TVs and that type stuff. But he untimely died at the age of 51. So that left it with mom and she was raising two children she scaled back quite a bit and sold off a lot of the stuff to make life possible. So, they were merchants, too, here.

TE: Both all the families seem like real true entrepreneurs in the business world and learning how to make a way back when things were tough. So, I mean that's to be applauded. And you mentioned Edmund Woods' place and who had bought the property? I live on Edmund Woods' place.

VD: Do you?

TE: I do. So, another circle has been made.

VD: So, Edmund had the first television in Fairview.

TE: Oh, did he?

VD: And it was quite a novelty, he got a lot of visitors, people going up there to see what the heck a television was. Now there may have been another one, but that's the story that I understood, was that he had the first television.

TE: Well, that's a good story too.

JR: You reckon that was back in the 50s?

VD: It was the very early 50s.

JR: Early 50s?

VD: Very early 50s.

JR: So, people could see the coronation of the queen.

VD: Yeah, probably.

JR: Yeah.

TE: Really.

CD: Or boxing matches.

VD: All you could really see was the snow on the-

CD: You need to tell about living in the back of the store and the excitement, that's a really good story.

VD: Yeah. When we moved here, the store had a little living quarters in the back, and we lived in there until... they bought it in ‘50 or ‘51, something like that. And we lived there until, I'm guessing ‘57. And we bought a house up on Wright Cove Road off of Old Fort then and moved up there. But I mean, you just went out through a door in the store into the back and as a kid I hung out in there all the time, and so I knew all the characters.

TE: I bet you did.

VD: I knew all the characters.

TE: And did those characters sit around the store a lot and tell stories?

VD: Yeah.

TE: Yeah.

VD: They did. And I told them stories, and-

JR: Got away with stuff.

VD: Got away with stuff. And it was interesting. I mean people talk about the characters, but I mean people hid their drinking a lot.

TE: Oh yeah.

VD: A lot. I mean, people were ashamed, the wives were ashamed to stop with their husbands and pull into the parking lot to be seen that they were in there buying beer. It was funny. But I met a lot of true characters of the Fairview characters that way.

CD: We search for-

TE: Could you name?

CD: ... article though last night about your father. So, about what happened one night?

VD: Well one night, and this was probably in ‘54 or ‘55 and we were living in the store, and he heard somebody in the store, somebody had broken in, so he had a double barrel shotgun and he went out, they called the sheriff's department and we went and he went out the... There used to be a rock end of the building that was the bedroom. He went out that end and with his shotgun and I don't know what transpired, but they exchanged fire, and there was bullet holes. We had a little Jeep, I forgot what they called them.

CD: Wagoneer?

VD: Well sort of. But there were bullet holes in it. But he got off both, he didn't get hit, but he got off both barrels of his shotgun into their car and it injured one of them. And anyway, he punctured the gas tank and out where the Parkway comes across, they got out and ran and then the police caught them out there, but he had a gun fight.

TE: Do you by any chance or recall any of the names of some of those, what would been older guys sitting around in storytelling and-

JR: The real characters?

VD: The real characters, and do I do this and people don't mind that I, I mean, you know?

TE: As long as it's in a very loving way.

VD: Well and it was. There was like Hap Merrell, who was Guy Merrell's brother, he used to come up on a regular basis. Henry Woods, he came down and stopped a lot. Dewey Huntley, Dewey was a great storyteller. He entertained, this you may have known Bud, he was the rock mason, he's deceased from recently. He was the best rock mason in Western North Carolina, no doubt about it. But his dad was a rock mason also and his name was Dewey. He worked on the Grove Park Inn and that, there was a lot of rock masons worked out there, but he worked on that.

But Dewey kept everybody quite entertained with his stories because he could just go on and on and on with his stories, there was, we had Vestal Harwood, he lived over on Brush Creek Road. I don't know that's upper or lower, but when you turn by Daltons and go off that way, Vestal would stop by there a lot. And his wife's name was May, and sometimes when mom was working in the store, she would keep me and my sister, but Vestal would stop at the store. I can't remember whether he drank a beer or not, but he stopped at the store a lot and he took a trail that went across the hill there over to his house. And a lot of times he would say, "Tip, do you mind if Van goes home and takes supper with me tonight?" And-

TE: That's sweet.

VD: ... so he would put me on his shoulders and carry me over there and dad would come home and pick me up later.

JR: That's so sweets, lovely.

VD: And he was down there one day with his shotgun. He'd been out hunting and a kid came up, his name was Ned Williams and he says, "Vestal does that shotgun kick very bad?" And Vestal says, "Well, son, I'd just about as soon be in front of it as behind it." But that's just the kind of stuff that, you know, there was constant storytelling and it was a trusting time growing up.

JR: Sounds good natured too.

VD: He was good natured. My dad, everybody in Fairview I think, knew him and he had a nickname for everybody in Fairview. But it was nothing unusual for me to pile in the, when Hap would come, I'm saying Hap Merrell, he took care of the cattle that was up on the hill. If you look from Woods across the hill over there, it may still be an old barn over there.

TE: There is.

VD: But Guy Merrell and Happy owned that. His name was Max. But everybody called him Happy. And he would come up and get a six pack of Miller Light when he went to go feed the cattle, and if I was there at that time, I piled in the truck and went with him to feed the cattle. I mean it was just a trusting time.

TE: That's a great description, a trusting time.

VD: It was.

TE: And it's so evident in what you've shared.

VD: And I'm trying to think, Albert Earwood was the mail carrier a lot of days, they had a morning and an evening Asheville Citizen Times then.

JR: Yes, they did.

VD: And in the evenings Albert would stop by and give us the paper and a lot of times I'd go on with him on the rest of the route and come back. I guess you could say people liked me, too. And I guess it was a large part of being exposed to them there. And-

JR: You weren't afraid?

VD: I wasn't afraid. And I was very friendly. And there was a lot of, Granville Justice, he was a farmer over on Brush Creek that used to stop and talk, he was in the-

CD: World War II.

VD: In World War II and he was on Iwo Jima, and his nerves were pretty shot when he came back, but he was a great guy. But that's just a few, there was a lot of people that stopped and it continued after mom ran the store. Other generations that stopped and were just family.

TE: How nice it would be if we could live that way now?

VD: It would be.

JR: It sounds like your parents set up an atmosphere that made it comfortable for people to let themselves be, and they didn't have to protect themselves. They could open up-

VD: They could.

JR: ...and be themselves.

CD: I guess Ruth retired from the store in 1975. But still at that time, guys would come in like C.P. Clare was the after-work crowd or other people would come into the store and they would bring their kids and she might help them do their homework. And then certain

kids got a candy bar every day. I mean they might sit on... At that time point, they didn't have a bar and bar stools and kids might set up at the bar and Ruth would just help them do their homework.

One character, which Charles Earwood and I have to say he was one of the latter ones, but he would be in there and tell stories every day, and he would, one day he was in there and he says, "I run things at my house." He said, "You guys talk about your wives and they tell you what to do, but I came here to tell you, I run everything at my house." And he said, "I can run the dishwasher, I can run the washing machine. I can run the vacuum. I want you all to know I run things."

TE: Great sense of humor. Just let me say now that so far you all are providing such a new or not new, a different aspect of Fairview that I had not heard. And it's refreshing. It's really wonderful.

JR: More social.

TE: And social. Much more social and as part of the history. So, this is great information that you have. I know that your families were entrepreneurs and in business, was there any farming that was done at home?

CD: We grew everything that we ate. Plus we had cattle so we raised, silage, Dad only had three daughters. I think we all could drive a tractor by the time we were six years old. And Nancy has, I mean because we planted cornfields, I can remember sitting back on the cultivator while either Nancy or Gale would be driving the tractor to yell if the cultivator started getting over and cultivating up the corn that was sown that I'd had to yell at them, and we might be out there in bathing suits with baby oil rubbed and iodine mixed together, rubbed on us. That's why we're having to get our skin checked all the time now. But we would... We all farmed, and my parents, we grew our own, we raised our own meat. They even grew corn and would have it ground as older individuals for corn mill, the best cornbread you've ever tasted...

NT: Oh I know, we went somewhere and-

CD: To Old Fort to get it ground. But when they even became... Mom lived till 99 and dad died at 94. But even in their 80s we would be coming in, Nancy taught school all day, we taught school and putting up corn and green beans after school, they were big on raising everything they could to make-

JR: Hard working.

CD: Yeah.

TE: Very hard working. Did your parents farm Van?

VD: We had a garden. Mom had a garden, but that was... We had a calf or two something that we raised but not really. I had sort of my 4-H projects, that type thing. I think dad grew up on a farm and he didn't...

TE: He was not interested in getting back to it, was he?

VD: It was on the head of Brush Creek and there was a lot of rocks and I don't how they grew anything up there.

JR: Well and besides, he had all the vegetables and things he needed because he had the store.

VD: And people brought him stuff all the time. I mean, I can remember always there was somebody bringing him produce.

JR: Extra squash and onions and things like that.

TE: If you all would share some of your experiences in school in Fairview, if you remember from elementary time or high school?

CD: You remember anything that you want to share about when you were going to Fairview Elementary School?

NT: I would to, but I don't, not now. I can't remember.

CD: Okay. Well, I can remember. Well, I went Mr. Morgan and Ms. Lunsford. Mr. Morgan was the principal. Ms. Lunsford was the secretary, and she was still running the school when my children went to school there. But they call Mr. Morgan, Bull Morgan, you may have heard of that before. But that was his nickname, and that's what they called him. And my first-grade teacher had a disability. She had one arm that was much shorter than the other one and that she could not use. And I started first grade as a five-year-old, and they did not have kindergarten at that time. And she had 30 students. And I think she set us all up to get our attention and left the room.

This was right at the beginning of the school year and told us not to get out of our seats. And we were located at that time in the newer part of the building, and so there was a bathroom and a water fountain in our room. And I got up and got a drink of water while she was gone. Only one student did not get up. And so, when she came back in, she lined us up and she paddled everyone in the room except that one student. And at that point girls had to wear dresses and we had thick petticoats and it didn't hurt. But she let us know that she meant what she said and she did not have any trouble controlling her classroom of 30 kids the rest of the year, she was there.

NT: Well, what is it?

CD: Mrs. Martin was her name and she was not from the area. I don't know who her family, I didn't know them. I know that she drove a car that was unique. I can't remember the name of it. But it was not one that we would see in Fairview every day. And my only other big thing I can remember about elementary school that we would get behind the school, there was the front doors that would come in by the office and the little atrium area, and then there was back doors. And before school started in the morning there was a brick wall right there. And as kids we would get together and pitch pennies. Have you ever heard of pitching pennies?

TE: I have.

CD: And we would be. So, we were basically gambling.

TE: Gambling.

CD: Yeah. So, everybody would throw their pennies and the one that could get their penni the closest to the wall would get everybody's pennies. And that was another thing. So, I was there from first grade through eighth grade. I don't know what age I was when I was starting pitching pennies, but that was a big highlight, if you got to school early in the morning, so.

TE: And had a penny.

CD: And had a penny, that you might get somebody else's penny.

TE: By any chance, do you recall the name of that one student who did not get up while the teacher was out of the room?

CD: I do. Her name was Phyllis Merrell.

TE: And did she ever get in trouble?

CD: Now that I cannot say. And no, I don't remember that year. I don't think she did. I was so busy getting in trouble myself probably, I couldn't keep up with the others. But no, not that I know of. I mean, she was a very good student. She did not move from her seat. But there was some very sweet, well-behaved students that-

TE: Just wanted to get up too.

CD: Yeah, just might have stood up and stretched their legs and sat back down. But it didn't make a difference if they got out of their seat. They were paddled.

TE: Now did you go to high school in Fairview?

CD: No, Nancy went to... Did you go to Reynolds at all?

NT: I went two years.

CD: Two years at Reynolds. But Reynolds at that time was not a... Hang on just a minute. The word left me.

VD: Accredited.

CD: Accredited. And so, then she went to Lee Edwards, which is now Asheville High.

TE: Okay.

NT: and did two years.

CD: Yes. And then I went to Reynolds two years and then I transferred to a private school in Asheville, the Newfound School.

TE: Okay.

CD: And then Van, do you want to talk about your history at-

TE: What about elementary in Fairview?

VD: Well, I had a-

TE: Did you go to... Okay.

VD: Yes, all eight years.

TE: Okay.

VD: And I don't know, it was a good experience. Most of the teachers were local people that actually grew up in the community. The biggest part of them. I mean some of them weren't, but of course I knew them through family and I'm sure Cindy did too. Which it may more influence out of community. But anyway, I knew them all through growing up prior to school, through family. So, I got along real well through school, I don't remember any great things about it. It was just-

TE: Just kind of normal.

VD: Kind of normal. I tried to do the best I could and I hated to, I don't know where I lost that drive, but I hated not to be a good achiever in school. And I seemed like I always had teachers that I liked, there was in the third grade, was it third grade or fourth grade? Mrs. Allison.

CD: She would've been... Didn't you have Ashworth in third grade?

VD: Yeah.

CD: So, it'd been fourth grade you had Mrs. Allison.

VD: I didn't have Mrs. Allison.

CD: Okay.

VD: Anyway, Mrs. Allison was the teacher everybody wanted, because she told lots of stories, and I didn't get her. But for the most part, I got in the teacher's room that I wanted to be in every year. And seventh grade was Beth Nesbitt, she was a native.

NT: I know her.

VD: And from first grade on I loved her, and I couldn't wait to-

TE: Be in her class.

VD: Be in her class. That was something that I just really wanted to do.

TE: Did any of you at some point in school, as you were getting a little older, participate in any sports?

CD: I played basketball. That was all they had for girls at the time, well you could be a cheerleader or basketball until high school. Van, you did something. You had a unique experience in high school when you did get into a little trouble.

VD: I did get into a little trouble.

TE: Tell us.

VD: I was just good in grammar school. Well ,you know, I graduated, I went into Reynolds in 1963, I guess it's about 1964 that the Beatles made their appearance. So, I combed my hair down and I had to cut across in bangs like theirs. And Mr. Pennell said, "Son, you're going to have to go home. You're disrupting school." And so, I called my mom, she came and got me, took me home. She took me back the next day and she says, "This is a free country. He has the right to wear his hair any way that he wants to and there is no reason that he should be out of school." And so-

TE: Good for mama.

VD: I was back in school the next day and had no more problems with that.

JR: Did any of the other students copy you?

VD: Yeah.

JR: I would think so.

VD: But I was the groundbreaker.

JR: You were the one to set it up?

VD: I was the ground breaker.

JR: Yeah.

VD: So even after school, there was kids that after I'd graduated high school, younger kids, they called me Beatle Head.

TE: I like that Beatle head. For all three of you, what were some of your best experiences of living in Fairview?

VD: I think going back to what I sort of touched on before, I think was freedom. It was freedom. When we lived on Wrights Cove Road, my closest good friend lived up where you turn up Flat Top Mountain Road. I mean I've walked from the time I was 10 years old and I walked up to his house or he walked to my house and...

JR: Through the woods or on the road?

VD: Through the woods and partly on the road. I used to walk down 74. Guy Merrell had a son my age, Sam, and he was one of my very best friends, and so I walked down 74, down to Guy's. But there wasn't hardly any traffic. And-

NT: I know.

VD: It was-

JR: Safe.

VD: It was safe. But I think that was the thing was that, I don't know, you were never frightful. It was a non-fearful place. And going back to, when Cindy talked about the store, we started going in there after W.E. had leased it to Fred Bowman. But I mean we bought our shoes either there or at Guy Merrell's store. I mean.

CD: They sold clothes.

VD: They sold clothes and shoes and stuff. I mean, yeah. So, it was just a community that it really had everything you needed, pretty much.

CD: And even talking about the safety of, I know before I started school I was still young enough to wear, I wore shorts and didn't wear a shirt. And we lived on Cane Creek about half a mile from the store, and I very early on picked up on, well just put it on my account, the credit thing so I can remember, and we had some apartments that we rented, a house we rented, there was a boy and girl who lived there, and so I probably convinced them, let's walk to the store and get candy. And they had a little dog. So, we walked on the road down to the store, we slipped off from home, and-

NT: That's about, well, it's about one-

CD: Quarter of a mile, you guess.

NT: Yeah.

CD: And so, you couldn't see it, and maybe it's a little bit more than that. But we went in and charged our candy at Bowman's. I knew put it on the ticket, I had that down pat. And so we went over to sit in front of the service station, which was leased by someone else, but they all knew who we were, and we were sitting on the bench in front of the service stations because people hung out there, eating our candy and someone came into pumping gas, and I didn't know, but I can remember them saying, "Do you want us to take you home?" And I said, "Will you let the dog in the car?" And they said, "Yeah, we will." So, we all piled in the back of the car and they took us home.

And I'm sure whoever was running the service station would not have let us get into a car with someone that would have hurt us, that would be. So, they looked after each other. And then I've always loved ponies and horses. And so, I had ponies and I rode my pony all over by the time I was in third grade. So around seven to eight years old, I rode all over Fairview. I would be on Old Fort Road. I mean I rode on the road. My parents would not let me ride a bicycle on a road, but they would let me ride a pony. I might be on Garren Creek Road and if it got dark and I wasn’t home, they'd come to look for me, but we also learned how to drive a car very early on the road out here like we'd started the tractor at six. And I'm not exaggerating.

NT: I know, really.

CD: And so, by the time I was 12, one way they kept me in church, this was a big church incentive, was I got to drive to church every Sunday and drive back, which was on Garren Creek.

JR: And how old were you?

CD: I was 12.

JR: 12.

CD: Yes. So, I got to drive the car. And I mean the roads looked big then, but the cars were big. But now they're the same roads. They're not that big. And my cousin who lived on Village Road, she got to drive at the same age too. But her parents were even more trusting her mom when she was 12 had another baby, and her mom was not well, something was going on, and so she put the laundry in the backseat because my mom had a washer and dryer and the baby in the backseat and my 12-year-old cousin brought them over to my house. So, there was a lot of, when Van mentioned freedom, we had some freedom.

TE: You did.

JR: That's a good life.

CD: Nancy got, you and Patsy Merrill and Helen Harper. Didn't you have a wreck out when you were about 15?

NT: Oh yeah, I remember.

CD: Or maybe, I don't know who was driving. But because we'd go to town without a driver's license, it was just, I mean, I got a car at 15 and could drive to town without a driver's license.

JR: Asheville, you mean.

CD: Yeah, to town.

NT: I would say it didn't have much.

CD: Anything to do out here. So, I mean we-

TE: Go into town. I'm assuming during this time period that you've described all the freedom that you had and the safety that existed that, did anybody lock doors at home?

VD: No. And then it meant every gun daddy had given me all, I got all daddy's, every somebody came and stole every one of them, but we didn't lock the doors, it wouldn't have mattered anyway, but probably, but no, nobody locked the door. Or if they did, this was the period of those skeleton keys, and if you had... basically one would fit everything.

TE: You'd fit everything. If you were rating Fairview now on a safety scale of one to 10, with 10 being high, where would you put it?

VD: Being I don't live here now, I don't know.

CD: I will tell you this. I had this experience because my daughter lives in the same place that I grew up and we never locked a door, and I spent the night there about two years ago and it's an eighth of a mile from the road, you can't see the road. And I woke up in the middle of the night hearing this man cursing and crying and saying, "Someone come and get me." And yelling for help. And he was under the influence of drugs or alcohol or both, and I got my son-in-law up and we called the sheriff's department and they came and got him. But I mean, I definitely could not see my grandchildren going out of their driveway unsupervised. I would not want that to happen.

TE: Yeah.

CD: But from where it is now, but when I was a kid, I felt totally safe and the alarm would occasionally go off at the store, and even though dad, he owned the building, didn't own the merchandise, he would still respond, and so would David. And usually was never anyone there but dad might put the shotgun in the car to go down and say, "Let it go. Let me go." It was real exciting times about something might be happening. But he would get out and go through the store and he'd never get a gun out. He said, "Let me tell you, if you're going to bring out a gun in choice, you better be ready to use it." And he said, "That's the easiest way to get shot is to pull your gun out." And he said, that he would go check the store, and there was never anything that happened, but.

TE: What you all have said about safety back in the time period that we've been discussing with a lot of people echoes that what they have said as well that you felt free and you felt safe as opposed to now that... And why do you think that's the case? What has changed?

CD: One thing that when we were all young is that we knew everyone that lived in the community.

JR: That's the key, isn't it?

CD: Or we knew their family background. We knew there were people who lived in the community that you didn't trust, and we were made known to who we would not get in the car with. And there were people that looked out for you around those people. But we knew the background and the history from just about the Civil War. In fact, part of my family dates back that they went to fight for the Union Army and there was always some concern about their family because that was what they chose to do. I mean, so there was history that just kept coming down that would even date that they might be a grudge held against that family because there was members that fought for the Union.

NT: Absolutely.

CD: I mean that was just, but it went that far back, and knowing about people.

TE: What kind of a role do you remember from, I don't know, let's say teenage years and up that the church played in the communities?

CD: I think the church always played a huge role in our community. If you didn't go to church at that time, you were considered very odd or queer, I mean, I can remember a family that I heard my parents for the first time, I heard the word atheist. And I don't know that they were atheist or they just did not go to church. As Van mentioned, his mom, they sold the only beer. But when David, Nancy's husband, owned the store, he decided to apply for his license to sell beer, too. Beer was moving on out, we were getting beer everywhere and it was bringing in profit. And I can remember being in

church on Sunday morning when they brought up about Fairview Supply selling beer, and my dad standing up and saying something because it was a big deal.

TE: Called out in church.

CD: Yes.

VD: He didn't get up and say anything.

CD: No, he did not. I can remember them calling on him to pray one Sunday and he didn't say a word. And finally my mother started praying, but it was always, I mean, in the Baptist Church at that time, I have seen them drag people down the aisle, I mean, it was a scary, I had been scared to death in church before that I mean, yeah, that I'm going, "Don't come get me today." But that was just-

TE: That's pretty bold.

CD: It was... Yes. I have seen the minister and deacons come back into the back of the church and get people in, pull them down to the... So the church had a big impact. I mean huge. And the church that we went to, my grandfather helped found that church, so we were supposed to be very-

VD: Exemplary.

NT: And then how many did 1, 2, 3, 4. How many does, what is it? Never mind, I can't explain it.

CD: It was Pleasant Grove Baptist Church that he helped found. And he also, what the Pleasant Grove Cemetery, he helped build the first coffin for the person that was buried there and dig the first grave, that's what has been told to me as far as the history.

NT: Really?

CD: Yes. And I'll tell you who tell Dotson.

VD: Ed.

CD: Ed Dotson has that history of that church cemetery. And Ed had shared that with me.

NT: What is it?

CD: That Grandpa Marra built helped build-

VD: But the church did play-

CD: A first coffin.

VD: ... I think a huge role in the community.

CD: And also they had to dig the first grave.

JR: Well, I understand that people were grouped by which church they went to, there was a competition between the churches.

CD: Definitely, I think that some churches felt that they were more influential than other churches, and so there was definitely prejudice between who-

JR: High Baptist and Low Baptist?

CD: Yes.

NT: I could, the other day and I went to church. Not this church but-

CD: The one in Biltmore?

NT: No.

CD: The one near you?

NT: No, is this left and do this side. This side is and the other one did too, meant-

CD: I'll have to ask because I don't know.

NT: It's just a mile or two.

CD: Okay. I'll have to ask.

TE: In your earliest years that you have memories of school and being out and doing little social things, were there any individuals of different racial backgrounds living in Fairview?

VD: There were, but they didn't attend.

CD: Right, on Concord Road, we had-

VD: End of Webb Creek.

CD: Great families. But integration did not occur in Fairview until I was in sixth grade. And I don't know whether you've ever done any of the history of integration in Buncombe County. I did a little of that when I was in college, but I can remember, what they started doing is just integrating like first graders and then they would pick up. But there were some African American folks that were bussed for hours each day to get into schools. And in sixth grade at Fairview there were two classrooms of students and we used to average about 30 kids a classroom. So, I guess about 60. And there was three girls that came and they were scared to death.

TE: I bet

CD: But I will say this, on one of those girls that I met prior to that, I went to the dentist in Skyland, and this one of the girls I met at the dentist office because my mom had a dentist appointment, you may not want to hear this story, but that I went in, there was a taxi outside and we didn't see many taxis, and there was a little girl in there crying, and this was before sixth grade, and she was holding her face and sobbing her eyes out. And I assume was her mom was there with her, and we went on back, and this really impacted

my life for a long time. And because the dentist said to my mom, "I don't care how long they sit out there, I'm not treating that..." and made a very derogatory statement about her.

TE: I'm so sorry.

CD: And that really impacted me about equal rights and humanity just, but later, that same girl ended up in sixth grade with me. So, this very nice, sweet young lady. And-

JR: I wonder if she ever got treatment for her tooth.

CD: I mean, I don't know. But it, even up until we left here in '99, our kids were in high school. We had an African American student that attended our church and we would go places together and you would still see lots of racial bias at that time. And I think in a way, and from Rutherford County, I see it has increased over the last... What I expected to happen growing up, when I did that people, I expected the nation would change and we would become more tolerant and educated, a lot more educated and love each other. But I feel like that we have gone the opposite way.

TE: In many ways I think too.

CD: Yeah.

TE: And that's unfortunate.

CD: Yes.

TE: It really is.

CD: I mean even with, I'm just surprised at the illiteracy in our country at this time.

TE: As teenagers, in starting to date, where did you all go and where did you hang out?

VD: Bucks.

NT: Oh yes!

TE: I've only lived here five years.

JR: Oh, you had some good times there, didn't you?

TE: Tell me about that.

VD: On Tunnel Road, where... help me... a seafood place.

CD: It's near where Applebee's.

VD: Applebee's in there.

JR: Yeah. That's right.

VD: It was Buck's. It was a nice restaurant but it was also a drive in, and then there was Shoney's across the street, Babe's on up the street and Wink's right before you got into the tunnel. So that was the thing, you cruised all those places and Buck's was the biggest one, it probably had room for 100 cars to park in there, you went in one aisle, out one aisle, it was quite the cruise thing, but doing that and going to the movies, that was basically-

CD: Prom nights you went inside to Buck's, to eat inside.

JR: I was going to say, Buck's inside that was... I mean it was THE restaurant in town.

TE: Was it like a burger place or?

JR: No, it had steaks.

VD: It was great steaks and-

TE: Okay.

VD: And outside they had the great steaks, or sirloin steak sandwich, that was it.

JR: So good.

VD: It was.

TE: You talked about cruising around to those different places. Do you recall approximately how much gas was a gallon?

VD: Somewhere in the 30 cent range. I remember one of my best friends, he ran the service station part at Fairview Supply for a few years there. But anyway, he had a whole lot of fast cars and we used to go drag racing on Saturday nights and stuff like that. But anyway, he had a Corvette and it would cost, if he let me take it to town, it would still cost me $5 about to drive it in town, it drank so much gas. But gas was about 30, maybe 39 cents a gallon.

JR: I used to buy a dollars worth of gas at a time. I'd just buy dollars worth.

CD: I can remember when I was 16 that if I skip lunch at school, which cost 35 cents, I could buy a gallon of gas for 35 cents. So, if I kept my lunch money and didn't eat lunch, that was gas money. That was a real incentive if to skip lunch. But it made be-

VD: And they used to have a lot of gas wars then. And I mean it would come down into-

JR: I bet.

VD: ... 20 cents or less than that. It was interesting.

TE: My friends and I, gas was about 25 cents a gallon in my teen years. And so each of us would throw in a quarter.

JR: Yeah, there you go.

TE: And then we would go cruising on Friday night. So, it's a lot of fun. Are there any topics, any information that you all wanted to share that we have not asked about that you would like to share? Because if so, we'd love to hear it.

CD: We have lots of stories, but I don't know, is there any particular area, any particular subject?

VD: Just my recollection of Fairview, Fairview was a farming community, mainly dairy farms. I counted the other day, and I can't remember counting, but there was probably 20 scattered-

JR: I'll be darned.

VD: Around in here, and I kept thinking, "Oh gosh, there's another one." Some of them had a half a dozen cows, some of them had 100 cows. But that was the biggest industry in Fairview. It was probably not raising food crops, but it was a dairy community. And sadly there's, I think only a couple of them left now.

JR: In the area there were dairy people, dairies who processed and bottled and everything they had.

VD: There was that too, I think earlier. But this what I remember was the milk truck coming around.

JR: So did people bottle it at home and deliver it or-

VD: No.

JR: No. You had a central dairy that processed and-

VD: Yes.

CD: Yeah. But didn't someone give us like a bottle from Brush Creek Dairy? So, some of those little ones too.

VD: Somebody gave me a bottle that says Dotson. And this would've been Jerry Rogers. He collected milk bottles. And I can remember over at my grand, I never knew that they had a dairy, but they had a silo. And the barn was big enough to, so there was possibly a

dairy there in the 30s or 40s, and I don't know who to ask now, but Jerry seemed to think that that bottle came from over there, which they would've bottled themselves. And I don't know.

CD: People could not travel to get their milk if they didn't have a milk cow, the dairy had to be close by. I mean, and there was also post offices all over in these little back roads because they couldn't travel to get what they needed.

TE: That's changed.

VD: But that's just now where all the developments are....was dairy, but that was the dairy farms. That was the dairy farms.

CD: And I can remember as a child, because all the Cane Creek valley was planted in corn, and this was back in the late 50s, early 60s, they crop dusted. And we would sit on top of our house, our parents' house and watch the crop dust planes.

VD: Probably DDT.

CD: It probably was. Because I mean our wildlife just died out. You didn't see, even though we didn't have wildlife in Fairview back then, I never saw deer in the wild until it became populated here. I mean, you didn't see fox, you didn't see skunks. You would see possums, but-

JR: Why is that?

CD: No rats. Because all the DDT and the chemicals that were used is what I imagine because where there was corn and crops, they did that, it went into our streams. And through the runoff.

JR: And we've had another person that we interviewed say that when you drove down Cane Creek, it wasn't open like it is now that all they saw was trees and then there would be fields. But...

CD: Now I can remember the big fields, lots of fields and not the houses enough to where they would have a plane in there to crop dust. And that was a real big thing. We sat on the roof of the house to watch though.

VD: While we're on the airplane thing and then I know you gotta go.

TE: No go ahead.

VD: Another big entertainment was on Saturday or Sunday was going to the old Asheville Airport out where the industrial park is on, what is that Mills Gap Road?

TE: Yes.

VD: You went out there and you set up on the bank and watched the planes.

JR: Oh yes.

VD: Land and take off. I mean they would be a huge crowd. I mean it was a big deal that was-

TE: You're the first person to share that as a place to go to and have fun.

VD: It was. I remember learning to identify different planes and I think a DC-3 was probably the biggest thing that came in there. But it was an entertainment for people. And-

JR: We did it when I was growing up.

VD: Yeah. We didn't have... I guess a lot of people went and watched the train come by somewhere too. But, uh...

TE: I love watching trains go by.

CD: There was also a buffalo on Sunday afternoon entertainment.

VD: Have you ever heard this one?

TE: No.

CD: Okay. So on Emmas Grove Road was gravel, but soon as you turn onto Emmas Grove Road, the property on the right, which was, I don't know who owns it on the ends, the Myers owned it on down, all that was kinda swampy, and it was owned by Ledbetter Rock Company and I was a Ledbetter, but they were not Fairview Ledbetters. Their company was in Asheville, but they had buffalo in there. And so that was another big real, let's go see the Buffalo on Sunday afternoon.

JR: And you just watch them walking around, chewing and whatever they do.

VD: It was easy entertainment back then.

NT: Well, at my house is not a deer, but-

CD: She’s been having bear come to her house now, I mean we've had year before last three cubs last year two cubs, and they're back-

NT: Yesterday. Yeah. And it's getting not good because it's so-

CD: They're worried it'd hurt their dog.

NT: See it's not anymore houses.

CD: Yeah. No place for them to live.

TE: Yeah. That's-

VD: We're taking their habitat.

CD: Yeah.

TE: Yes, we are. We're rushing out lots of wildlife and that's sad.

NT: I know.

TE: Do you have any questions or topics that we didn't touch on?

JR: I could just listen to stories. I love this. Great stories, great times.

CD: Well, I can tell, this is one I always love. So, Fairview, when my parents were young and this one of their stories, my dad's stories, where Brush Creek cuts off of 74, there's Dalton's on one side and there's that green house on the other side. Or maybe it's green, I'm not sure what color it is. But there's a house on the other side that used to be a dance hall.

TE: Oh really?

CD: In Fairview. There was a couple of dance halls. There was one on church road too and my dad used to... There was at the Rec out where the Rec Park is, there was a dance hall there and he used to call square dances some.

TE: Oh really?

CD: But this was before he was married and got married in 1936. So prior to that, he and Dick Fite, who his... Fite family, lots of Fites in Fairview, were going into this dance hall and they were feeling pretty rough and tough, and dad said that, Dick said, I see he was arguing with some of the people in there that he said, "You stand out here and when I throw them out, you cock 'em one." And dad said that Dick went in and he was the first one thrown out the door, so that was the end of that.

JR: Well now that's interesting that you had dance halls. Was there a conflict between the church and the dance hall?

CD: I am sure. And I know that there was a law in Buncombe County that you couldn't sell alcohol within so many feet of a church, but then I don't know whether any of the alcohol in these dance halls were legal. Yeah, it was probably all illegal that was coming through there. And-

TE: I'm glad you shared that because this is the first time we've heard about it.

JR: Absolutely. Nobody has ever mentioned this.

TE: No.

CD: Well, and my dad's family, his grandmother, they had a permit after prohibition. They had a stamp for their own still, and so my dad said, and she was the post-mistress too, they were on number nine road just out of Fairview.

JR: Who is this? You're talking about?

CD: My great grandmother, my dad's grandmother.

JR: She was a post-mistress?

CD: Mistress and they had a stamp for, had to have a still. And so they had white liquor in the house, and he said that his grandma, when he spent the night over there, first thing she did the morning was have a dipper of white liquor to get her day going.

NT: Oh my goodness.

CD: But from that time on, I grew up hearing stories about family, and like I said, it was included the members of our family that fought for the Confederate Army, members of our family that went and fought for the Union Army, and even though there was bickering, there was respect, like our uncle that was in the Union, fought for the Union Army. He helped come in and sow his crops in the spring and then gather them. He would go in and out even while participating. But the stories were passed down. We thrived on stories and-

JR: Well, you had more time for storytelling then, sitting on the porch, sitting around the kitchen table?

VD: When you're going, and this is something I always say, that's what's happened to our society a lot is air conditioning. Everybody stays inside, they're not out on the porch where you pass by and you visit anymore.

JR: That's right, yeah.

CD: And we also because it was agriculture, you're out there breaking green beans and you're working together and we did a lot of community-

NT: And do it is all the time. Is what the T-

CD: Now, people watch TV all the time?

NT: No. Not doing your-

JR: Your telephones or?

CD: Yes. Texting.

NT: I don't know, I can't do it.

CD: Yes.

JR: You're not missing anything.

CD: I feel like even with my own family left out with texting that we needed to hear voices and talk-

JR: And see people in body.

TE: I have to admit to texting, but at the same time, I think what texting is doing to young children starting so young doing that is they're not overall, in my opinion, learning correct sentence structure, usage of language, punctuation and so forth because everything's abbreviated.

JR: And also loss of respect because you won't say things to somebody's face that you might text.

TE: Yeah. So, it's a lot of changes have been good for I think our general society, but as you said, we do stay in a lot and that makes a big difference in how we interact.

CD: Became a lot more isolated. And I think that it goes back to the importance of church because that was the big social outlet growing up is what we did at church and getting together with community, and I think that had a big impact too.

VD: I've got one more little thing.

JR: Please.

VD: I mentioned Sam Merrell.

JR: Yes.

VD: Is my age and his grandmother lived up on Church Road just below the church. And Sam and I were probably 10 or 12 years old and we went up there, and she had us dig up red bud trees. She says, "Every man needs to plant a tree. Sometime in his life he needs to plant a tree." So, we dug up the red bud trees and mine grew up at my mom's house, and so I don't know where Sam planted his, but Grandma, Granny Merrell, I think that's what they called her. She had us dig up a tree and plant them.

TE: That's interesting.

JR: That's wonderful.

CD: Granny Merrell was popular with lots of kids.

VD: Yeah.

CD: I'm sure that went on to lot of-

TE: I like that.

VD: That was just something that I happened to think of.

TE: Yeah. Glad you shared it.

JR: I wonder if the tree is still there.

VD: Way ahead of Arbor Day and people doing that.

TE: Ahead of her time in some ways.

VD: Mine up at my mom's house, I planted them near a stream and it sort of undermined them and washed them down. But that was-

JR: It's too bad.

VD: But that’s just something, I happened to think-

TE: That's interaction again though with people in the community.

VD: Exactly.

JR: And between generations.

TE: Generations.

JR: That teaching quality and values.

VD: Values.

JR: Respecting.

VD: Yeah.

TE: Yeah. Respect the earth... Well, Nancy, Cindy, Van, thank you all so much. This has been delightful.

VD: Oh, thank you.

TE: And you have all three of you shared information that we had not heard.

JR: Absolutely.

TE: And it's just been wonderful. And again, I thank you very much.

CD: You're very welcome.

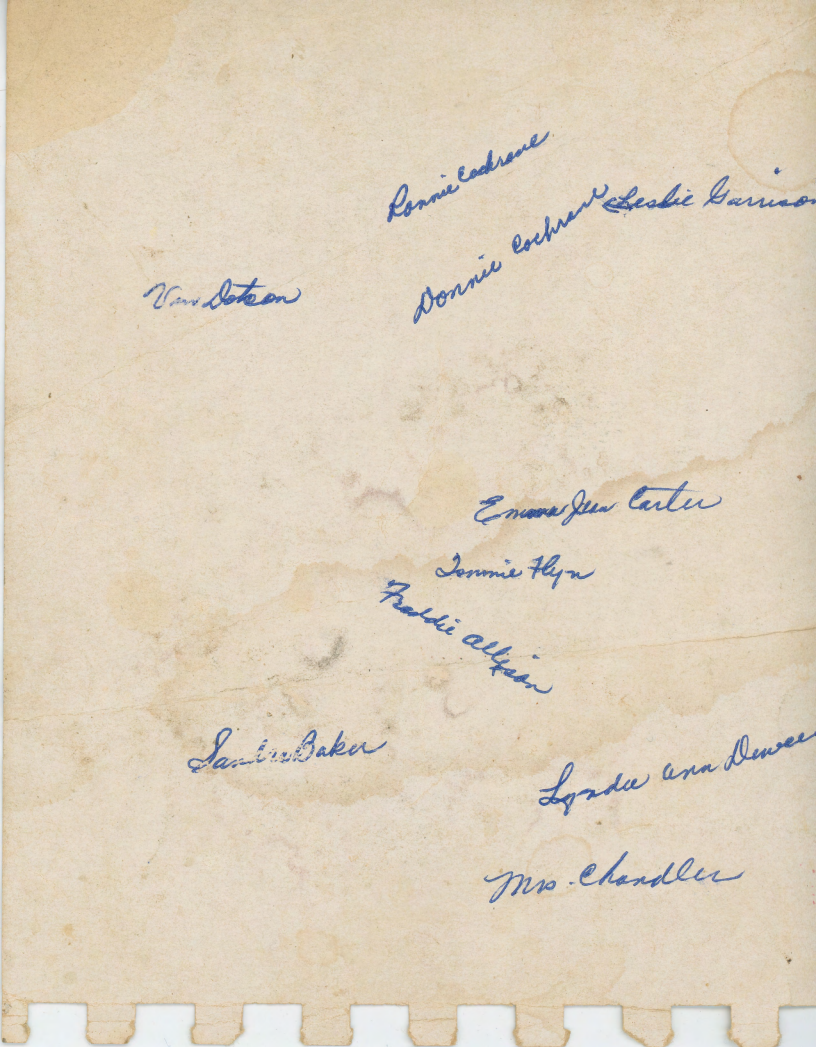
VD: You're very welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW.

SNOWDRIFT
FOSTACON SOAP

Ben Williams Store
sold to W. E. Ledbetter
1939?

Mrs. Chandler
FIRST GRADE


Ronnie Cochrane
Donnie Cochrane
Leslie Garrison
Van Dotson
Emma Jean Carter
Donnie Flynn
Freddie Allison
Santa Baker
Lynda Ann Dewee
Mrs. Chandler

MYERS
PUMPS
WATER SYSTEMS
FAIRVIEW SUPPLY CO.
FAIRVIEW SUPPLY COMPANY

OUT
SEWING
MACHINE
REPAIRING
Coca-Cola
Coca-Cola
ICE COLD

RC
FAIRVIEW
GENERAL STORE
RC

FAIRVIEW
GENERAL STORE
ICE

7UP
FAIRVIEW SUPPLY
PEPSI
Marlboro
69c
MOORE'S
QUALITY SNACK FOODS

GROCERY & HARDWARE
Bud ICE

ICE
COLD

GROCERY & HARDWARE
KERN'S
BREAD
CAKES
Bud ICE
PEPSI-COLA

TICKLE'S

To Move Into Public Building

Fairview Post Office will move this fall from a private home to a public building.

For 32 years, the Post Office has been in the home of Mrs. Carrie Boykin, who was postmaster all that time until she retired last November. The present acting postmaster is Mrs. Mae Dotson.

The new building is being constructed off U.S. 74 by W. E. Ledbetter of Fairview. It will have 594 square feet of floor space and a parking lot of 875 square feet. It is expected to be completed and leased to the government by Oct. 1.

WE Ledbetter's store #2

Members of the senior class of Fairview high school are shown above from left to right, first row: Miss Mavis Williamms, Miss Beatrice Nesbitt, Miss Belvia Lytle, Miss Cora Trantham, Miss Janice Smart, Miss Mary Creasman, Miss Susie Jenkins, Miss Pauline Nesbitt, Miss Mary Louise Miller, Miss Pansy Merrel and Miss Geneva Harrison; second row, Miss Madlyn Guffey, Miss Kathleen Fore, Miss Evelyn Trantham, Miss Elsie Bailey, Miss Sue Tweed, Miss Louise Nesbitt, Miss Virginia Williams Miss Lucile Searcy, Miss Lura McCracken, Miss Martha Nesbitt and Miss Alice Moser, teacher; third row, John Bishop, Bernie Riddle, David Alexander, Howard Ledbetter, Malcolm Guffey, Theodore Briggs, Andy Nesbitt, Paul Nesbitt, Boyce Dotson, James Miller, Earl Edmonds, and Weldon Davis. Donzalee Dotson, another member of the class, is absent.